

Testimony

Joint Appropriations Committee

March 4, 2011

Good Evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Joint Appropriations Committee. My name is John Bradley, and I am the Executive Director of Liberty Community Services in New Haven. Liberty is a social service agency that has been operating in New Haven for over 20 years and we provide housing and support services to people who are homeless due to HIV/AIDS or mental illness. I am testifying about the Department of Social Services budget for 2011 – 2012. First, I would like to commend the Governor for protecting the safety net of housing by proposing only a modest reduction in the Housing and Homeless line in the DSS budget. This line includes funding for housing for people living with HIV/AIDS and we commend the Governor's commitment to that line and recommend that the legislature adopt that position.

My testimony today concerns DSS Bond fund. The Department's budget of bond funds was proposed at \$500,000 and the Governor recommended an increase to \$2,000,000. I would like to ask the Committee to support the allocation of \$1,500,000 in bond funds for AIDS Housing. Liberty, like several other AIDS Housing organizations in the State, purchased residences more than a decade ago with DSS Bond Funds. These residences have been used to house people who are homeless and who have HIV/AIDS and have served literally hundreds of men and women over the decades since they were purchased. Our operating grants allow us to manage the program but our DSS operating grant budgets do not allow for the recover of depreciation or any capital expenditures. DSS recognized that dilemma in the past and always maintain a \$1,500,000 bond fund line specific to AIDS residences. Those bond funds have not been available for several years and are not contained as a specified item in this year's budget. In our case, Liberty had a project approved by DSS in 2008 for which we never received funding

The DSS Bond funds are critical to the program and without them eventually these residences will become inoperable. This year we had to delay the entry of homeless individuals into our program while we once again attempted to make a temporary patch on a leaky roof. Our residences would need to be sold or closed if State bond funds are not available to us. This would not make sense as the State's investment in our work has been substantial. These facilities also allow us to attract other operational grants from the federal government so this is truly a wise investment. These bond funds would also go directly into job creation for roofers, painters, carpenters, and contractors so we request that you approve \$1,500,000 in AIDS residence bond funding.

Thanks you.

March 4, 2011

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony

Keith Iodice, Brain Injury Survivor

**Testimony Requesting that operating grant for
The Brain Injury Association of CT's not be Eliminated**

Good afternoon, my name is Keith Iodice.

In 1985 I suffered from a cerebral aneurysm. I was left with brain damage to my frontal lobe. After my surgery and recovery I needed help to re-adjust to society. All of my friends left me, they did not understand what had happened and why I changed. All that I had now was my family.

With the help of the rehabilitation of Fairfield county I was able to find full time employment. I got a job as a file clerk. After 15 years I had a relapse and I developed memory problems. Once again I found myself without most of my friends. My family was still in full support.

My sister Cindy, living in Hawaii, found BIAC. I joined two support groups. One of them was in Stratford run by Sue Rhode and Walt Valites. Carrie Krammer was Cindy's connection with BIAC. The second group was in Norwalk run by Pam Corker.

I was a regular member of both of these support groups. I was a regular member for about three years. I found them very helpful for me to learn that I was not the only one with my problems. I next moved to Oxford to work with Employment Options. It was difficult to go all the way to Stratford and Norwalk for support group meetings.

I found a meeting in Waterbury that wasn't too bad to get to.

I talked to Employment Options about starting a support group in their office. I contacted Sage Cochran, the support coordinator and she helped me start our social group. We have a small dedicated group. Everyone who attends is invited to participate fully. They all seem to have a great time. For the people in this group this is the only chance they have to get out and share with their peers.

Besides going to and running the support groups BIAC has more to offer me. The Valentines day dance is a lot of fun. This year I brought a date. We danced most of the night. Tina had never been to a BIAC sponsored event before and that night she had a great time.

The summer picnic is fun. I like to play volley ball. Again I enjoy seeing old friends.

In the fall I like to go to the retreat. All the events are fun. I am bust all weekend. Last year I won playing bingo. I also had a great time dancing. This is one of my favorites events.

Another one of my favorite activities is the Christmas party, food, music and dancing. These are my favorite things to do.

In summary I have to say that BIAC has not let my brain injury run my life, but let me live an independent life like everyone else. If funding should be cut to this agencies I don't know where to turn for services.